

REMARKS

Claims 1-22 are pending in the present application after this amendment adds new claims 17-22. Claims 6, 7, 9, and 14 have been withdrawn in response to an earlier restriction requirement. No new matter is added by the new claims, which find support throughout the specification and figures. In view of the amendments and the following remarks, favorable reconsideration of this case is respectfully requested.

Applicants respectfully submit that the finality of the rejection should be withdrawn since United States Patent No. 6,869,731 to Nobuta et al. (hereinafter referred to as Nobuta), which is applied to reject the claims, is a new reference which was not cited in response to an amendment to the claims made by the Applicant. In response to a telephonic inquiry to the Examiner made on or about September 13, 2005, the Examiner agreed with this analysis and indicated that the action is non-final.

Applicants note with appreciation that the Examiner acknowledges that claims 4, 5, 8, 10, and 15 are directed to patentable subject matter.

Claims 1-3, 11-13, and 16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Nobuta. Applicants respectfully traverse by antedating Nobuta by filing a certified translation of the priority document, Japanese Patent Application No. 2002-227160, which was filed on August, 5 2002. Nobuta, which issued on March 22, 2005, has a 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) priority date of October 15, 2002, which is after the priority date of the present application. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that Nobuta is not prior art with respect to the present application, and it is therefore requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

New claims 17-19 ultimately depend from allowable claim 4 and are therefore allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 4 is allowable.

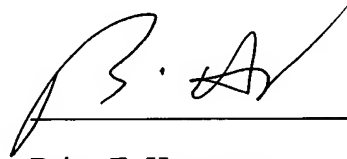
New claims 20-22 ultimately depend from allowable claim 5 and are therefore allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 5 is allowable.

CONCLUSION

In view of the remarks set forth above, this application is believed to be in condition for allowance which action is respectfully requested. However, if for any reason the Examiner should consider this application not to be in condition for allowance, the Examiner is respectfully requested to telephone the undersigned attorney at the number listed below prior to issuing a further Action.

Any fee due with this paper may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-1290.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. E. Hennessey', is written over a horizontal line.

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